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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3074

INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 003103

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/14/2016

TAGS: BE PGOV PREL PTER USUN LE SY EU IS

SUBJECT: DEMARCHE ON SYRIA AND LEBANON

REF: A. STATE 150032

1B. STATE 148157

Classified By: POLCOUNS TED ANDREWS. REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

11. (C) Poloff discussed points on Syria and Lebanon (refs A and B) with Jean-Luc Bodson, Deputy Chief of Staff, responsible for middle eastern affairs, in the Belgian Foreign Ministry. Bodson said Belgian Foreign Minister DeGucht generally believed a constructive dialogue was needed with all the parties in the Middle East conflict, including Syria, Iran, Hamas, and Hezbollah, in order to gain peace in the region. He acknowledged, however, it was less clear how and when such a dialogue should occur.

12. (C) Bodson said there was a division within the EU on contact with Syria. Although FM DeGucht favored dialogue with Syria, the lack of any "leverage" with Syria probably precluded such dialogue in the near term. Bodson stressed there were no plans for Belgian officials to meet or have contact with Syria in the near future.

13. (C) On Lebanon, Bodson felt the focus should be on how to channel relief and reconstruction assistance so that it remains in the proper hands and is appropriately managed and distributed (Belgium has offered 5.5 million euros to date). He indicated FM DeGucht may travel to Lebanon the end of October or early November as part of a trip to celebrate the opening of a new Belgian embassy in Doha. He thought Belgian troops should be on theground in Lebanon in early October.

KOROLOGOS

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